



Act Justly, Love Mercy | 14th March speech

Good evening, I'm Arran and I am here on behalf of the Young Greens of England and Wales. I'd like to welcome you all to the event today and I'd like to thank Educating Beyond Borders as well as St Mary Abbot Church for hosting. The reason we are here today is to discuss the Government's treatment of International Students. For far too long International Students have been treated as cash cows with universities and Vice Chancellors happy to reap the rewards of this senseless exploitation.

The UK's higher education system has wrongly classified vocational aspects of courses as "work". The difference between education and work are universally recognised, however Britain has fallen behind in this narrative. We as a nation need give international students the education they have paid for and deserve.

The UK has a world renowned higher education system, and practical training is a key and vital component of that system. 85% of non-EU and 83% of EU students are on technical, professional and vocational courses in British Higher and Further education. Qualifications form part of the degree. Technical, professional and vocational courses are part of a formal education process called vocational higher and further education. It is time the government stand up and recognise the difference between work and education.

The current system discriminates against international students and we must not ignore the injustice that International students are facing. It was the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr who said "*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere*". International students are one aspect of the Higher Education system which has been systematically set up to exploit students.

A recent Channel 4 Dispatches documentary highlighted the misuse of Students' fees as well as the worrying behaviour of Vice Chancellors. We as the Young Greens challenge this outdated system and welcome the cross-party support demonstrated on the issue. Further to this we have rolled out our People Not Numbers campaign to over 40 university campuses. This campaign aims to freeze tuition fees for EU students after Brexit and remove International Students from the net migration statistics. It is grassroots campaigns such as our own which hold the key to this campaign. We need to demonstrate how students value work experience and practical training as education.

We cannot allow International Students to face injustice from this government. There is worrying trend of marketisation of our Higher Education system. As of right now we are meeting in the backdrop of nationwide strikes. We cannot allow the consumerist nature of higher education to continue and the fight against it starts here.